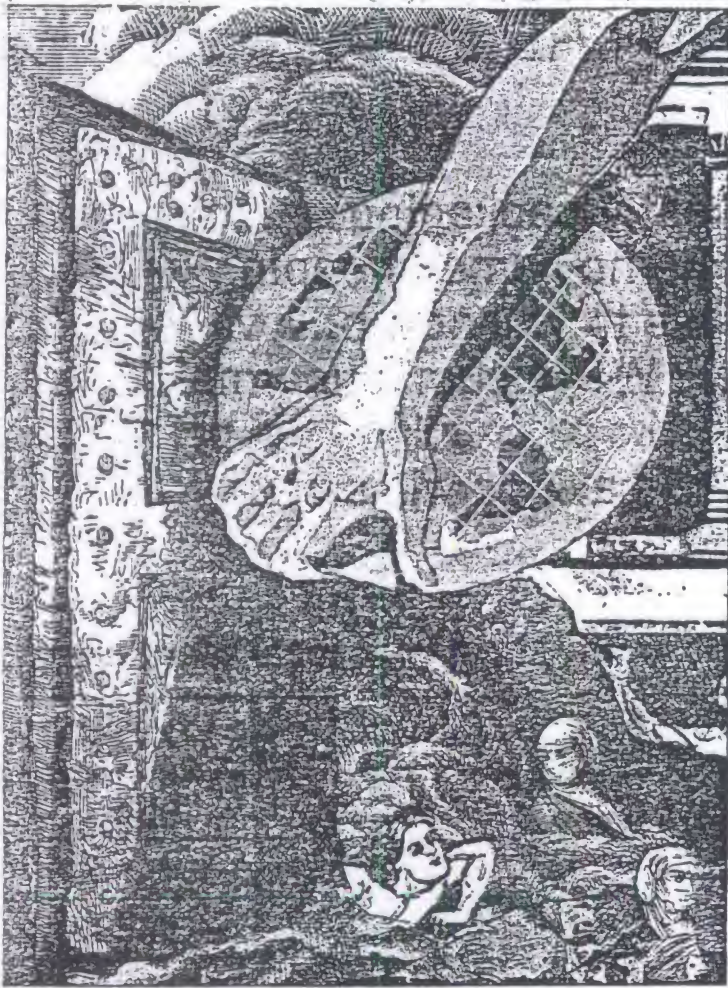


A Call for Openness as an Antidote To the C.I.A.'s Secrecy ('Poison')

By John Stockwell



AUSTIN, Tex.—In a telephone conversation with me on May 7, Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, said, more than once, "We can't have 215 million Americans thinking they know what the United States national security interests are." The subject discussed was secrecy—our intelligence organizations' right to undertake secret operations without the public's knowledge.

As the debate goes on about the need for, and efficacy of, our clandestine services, Admiral Turner's remark is worth pondering. Any discussion must be enlarged to face this question: Who will hold the balance of power for America: the people, as we have always thought and hoped, or a small elite band of bureaucrats?

America has paid a high price in support of its clandestine service. Recent reports have not been kind in evaluating the C.I.A.'s performance. A partial, and all too familiar, list of mistakes and examples of misuse of power would include "scientific" and "medical" testing on unwitting Americans, the Bay of Pigs, the fall of President Salvador Allende Gossens of Chile, the Congo operation of 1960, and the Angola debacle.

Yet many Americans still cling to the notion that beyond the blunders there is an effective, necessary organization. My 12 years with the C.I.A.'s

clandestine services in Vietnam and Africa have convinced me that this is not true.

We must understand that there are "two" C.I.A.'s. Of the 15,000 C.I.A. employees, about two-thirds are overt intelligence processors. The other third consists of clandestine operatives—the people we have in mind when we speak of the C.I.A. This covert arm represents the violent, manipulative option in our foreign affairs; its power cannot be underestimated.

In successive world crises, the clandestine service has seemed to offer an irresistible temptation to those in power to attempt a "magical," covert solution to troublesome, ill-defined problems in the third world. It has the ear of our Presidents, through the National Security Council. In field stations around the world, the C.I.A. eclipses the State Department in size and power.

The C.I.A.'s case officers' presence is multiplied tenfold by a string of covert agents who function under their direction. Financially, a C.I.A. station chief is almost a law unto himself. In Burundi, for example, I had a budget of \$30,000—more than 10 times the money allotted to the three Foreign Service officers.

The State Department helps formulate official policy, but the C.I.A. establishes the bonds of influence—often contradicting official policy. In each nation C.I.A. operators seek liaison with the local police, cultivating personal relationships and developing joint programs. Inevitably, its operations are based on these "special" relationships, and its sympathies lie with the police forces, not with the world's peoples.

Southern Africa stands as a classic model. The C.I.A. is by nature more comfortable with the South African security service than with the black liberation movements. With every indication that Southern Africa's white-minority rule is smoldering tinder, the C.I.A. continues to support the white redoubt in the name of our national interest.

During the covert Angola paramilitary program of 1975-76, in which Americans were used as military advisers without the knowledge of Congress, the White House or the State Department, the C.I.A. documented its alliance with the white Africans with abundant cables that coordinated the

joint United States-South African military effort. Our Pretoria, South Africa, Lusaka, Zambia and Kinshasa, Zaire, stations repeatedly urged even greater cooperation with South Africa. Our case officers stationed at these posts took independent initiatives to expand this union.

Nothing has changed. Since 1974, even as evidence mounted against the C.I.A., it has grown in power. Since President Gerald R. Ford's revision of the C.I.A. charter in 1976, the agency now has full license to run operations in any friendly country. The Carter Administration has merely reshuffled the C.I.A. supervisory boards, not altered their makeup.

Congress has been sucked deeper into the secret games. The C.I.A. will brief Congress, but Congress cannot take effective action against the C.I.A., or expose dubious operations. The Attorney General will discourage the C.I.A. from operating illegally in the United States but will not inhibit its overseas activities. Admiral Turner, now with expanded power, has taken a hard line on censoring former employees: Those who transgress the oath of secrecy should be jailed.

Our Constitution makes no provision for secret police; on the contrary, it provides guarantees and protections against threats to individual freedoms from such sources. In the last 70 years, we have forgotten our unique constitutional heritage, and created both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the C.I.A., granting to them blind charter, to run secret operations at home and abroad. We got what we deserved. While both the F.B.I. and C.I.A. have seriously violated our civil liberties, neither has been remarkably effective against their theoretical adversaries, the Mafia and K.G.B. (the Soviet Intelligence and Internal-security agency).

The world is shocked by the Red Brigades' assassination of Aldo Moro. International terrorism is a major problem in the world today. The Red Brigades and the Palestine Liberation Organization rightly seem to Americans as deadly, irresponsible, criminal organizations.

I do not mean to suggest that my former colleagues of the C. I. A. are international terrorists; they are not. But the C.I.A.'s recent record includes

the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba, Ngo Dinh Diem, the South Vietnamese President; Rafael Trujillo Monila, the Dominican Republic President; Gen. René Schneider, the commander of the Chilean Army; plus several bloody covert wars, and a deadly terrorist program in Vietnam called Phoenix that the C.I.A. says involved the killing of 22,000 Vietnamese.

Not one of these operations involved a crisis of cataclysmic importance to our national survival. Mr. Lumumba, for example, was an irritant to a remote foreign-policy initiative in the Congo, and even the C.I.A. managers involved in plotting his assassination testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 1975 that the threat he seemed to pose in 1960 was greatly exaggerated.

The common denominator in the assassinations and wars that now blight our record is secrecy. Secrecy is the poison that has tempted a succession of leaders to seek violent solutions to foreign affairs problems.

There is a second denominator: mediocrity. Secrecy breeds arrogance, and inefficiency. The C.I.A. has become careless even of its own security abroad, and its covert operations have been almost comical in their clumsiness.

The United States remains competitive because of its industrial strength, its wealth, and the energies of its people. It remains competitive despite its clandestine activities. By creating the C.I.A. and turning it loose, we betrayed our greatness and diminished the world's prospects for an era of peace. For violence is an inappropriate tool of peacetime diplomacy. Violence breeds chaos and more violence. The rules of peace must be different from the rules of war.

The American people are responsible for our country's conduct abroad. We have the right and the responsibility to monitor, to influence and to curb our leaders' activities, especially when those activities drift into secret operations that threaten peace. In order to fulfill that responsibility we must refuse the Administration, and Admiral Turner, the rights of secrecy that they are demanding.

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